



# Fit Business Tips of the Month

## MARCH

**D**id you know that March is National Nutrition Month®? What a great time to focus on making healthy food choices and enjoying more fun physical activity at work!

This month's Fit Business Tips will help you and your co-workers find simple and easy ways to kick up your daily fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity. You will also learn more about nutrient-rich spinach and tasty avocados. So, grab your friends and join in on the fun!

### QUICK AND SIMPLE TIPS

**A better "Club" at lunch:** Dump the traditional club sandwich during lunch. Instead, start a fun "Healthy Lunch Club" with your co-workers. Kick off your new "Club" with a one-of-a-kind salad bar. Have everyone bring their favorite salad toppings to combine for a nutritious and tasty salad buffet.

Whether you go out to eat with co-workers or meet every day in the lunchroom, make sure you support one another in making healthier food choices. Eating healthy is a lot more fun when you and your friends are doing it together!

**The buddy system:** We all need to take a break now and then to release a little steam while at work. An excellent way to relax is to take a "mental stress break" with a friend. A short 10-minute walk at break time is a great way to keep stress away. Even a simple walk around the block with a co-worker will keep you refreshed throughout the workday. For an extra boost of energy, try holding walking meetings with colleagues. The extra physical activity will benefit your health and wellness and the shared activity will be a great team builder.





# March's Fruit of the Month

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## AVOCADO

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### Health Benefits

Avocados are loaded with nutrients such as dietary fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin E, potassium, magnesium, and folate. They're also cholesterol and sodium free. Avocados contain 60% more potassium per ounce than bananas. This fruit is an excellent source of monounsaturated fat, which is good for heart health. Including avocados in your lowfat diet along with a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables will help you to maintain a lower risk of some cancers, vision health, and strong bones and teeth.

### Selection

A ripe avocado is firm, yet yields to gentle pressure. Hass avocados turn dark green or black when ripe. Certain other varieties retain a light-green color, even when ripe.

### Storage

Storage below 40 degrees F or above 70 degrees F will cause rot. Some varieties will spoil below 50 degrees. Ripen at room temperature (60 - 70 degrees F), then store at 45 degrees F. Once ripe, keep avocados in the refrigerator for up to a week.

### Preparation Ideas

Wash before cutting. Substitute mashed avocados for mayonnaise in sandwiches or spread on whole grain toast instead of butter. Sprinkle diced avocado over scrambled eggs instead of cheese. Liven up prepared salsa with fresh avocado slices.

## FEATURED AVOCADO RECIPE: AVOCADO TORTILLA SOUP

### Ingredients

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | (14-ounce) cans 33% less sodium chicken broth           | ½ | teaspoon ground black pepper  |
| 2 | (10 ¾-ounce) cans 33% less sodium condensed tomato soup | 1 | ripe avocado, peeled, seeded, and cubed (reserve 8 cubes for garnish) |
| ½ | bunch cilantro, leaves only                             | 8 | corn tortilla chips, crumbled   |
| 3 | cloves garlic, finely chopped                           |   |   |

### Preparation

1. In a large pan over high heat, combine chicken broth, tomato soup, cilantro, garlic, and ground black pepper.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Cool slightly, then puree small batches in a blender.
4. Return to pan, add avocado cubes and heat through.
5. Ladle into soup bowls and garnish with reserved avocado cubes and crumbled tortilla chips.

Makes 8 servings. 1 cup per serving.

### Nutrition Information Per Serving

Calories 100, Carbohydrate 10 g, Protein 4 g, Total Fat 6g, Saturated Fat 2 g, Cholesterol 5 mg, Sodium 115 mg, Dietary Fiber 1 g

Recipe courtesy of California Avocado Commission

\*Exceeds 5 a Day nutrition criteria for percent calories from fat.





# March's Vegetable of the Month

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## SPINACH

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### Health Benefits

Spinach is a good source of iron and is high in Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and folate. Including spinach in your lowfat diet along with a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables will help you maintain a lower risk of some cancers, vision health, and strong bones and teeth.

### Selection

Fresh spinach is usually found loose or bagged. It is also canned or frozen. Select leaves that are green, crisp, and smell fresh. Avoid leaves that are limp, damaged, or spotted.

### Storage

Fresh spinach should be kept in the refrigerator. It should be stored dry and packed loosely in a plastic bag. If stored right, it should last three or four days. Don't wash spinach until you are ready to use it.

### Preparation Ideas

Use fresh spinach to make a tasty and healthy salad. Add chopped spinach to lasagna and soup. Stir-fry spinach and add garlic, onion, and chopped red bell peppers for a colorful dish.

## FEATURED SPINACH RECIPE: SPINACH CORN CASSEROLE

### Ingredients

- 1 (16-ounce) package chopped frozen spinach
- ½ cup minced white onion
- 2 (14¾-ounce) cans creamed corn
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 2 teaspoons vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper

### Topping

- ½ cup bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon margarine

### Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Warm frozen spinach in a saucepan over medium heat. Drain excess liquid.
2. Combine spinach, onion, and creamed corn in casserole dish.
3. Melt 1 tablespoon margarine and add to casserole dish. Add vinegar, salt, and ground black pepper. Mix ingredients together.
4. Spread bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese over top of casserole. Melt remaining margarine and drizzle over topping. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes.

Makes 12 servings. ½ cup per serving.

### Nutrition Information Per Serving

Calories 105, Carbohydrate 19 g, Protein 4 g, Total Fat 3 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Cholesterol 1 mg, Sodium 254 mg, Dietary Fiber 3 g

Recipe courtesy of *Healthy Latino Recipes Made with Love*,  
*California Latino 5 a Day Campaign*

